

GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS: ISSUES BRIEF 1

MAKING THE LINKAGES

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The purpose of this Issues Brief is to assist programme managers and thematic advisors in donor agencies to make linkages between the overarching commitments of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and work on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is the first in a series of publications focussing on aid effectiveness, prepared by the DAC Network on Gender Equality.¹

This Issues Brief examines each of the five principles of the Paris Declaration and how these relate to work on gender equality and women's empowerment. It also sets out questions to ask when considering how to use the implementation of the Paris Declaration in country programmes as a means of advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

"Aid is only effective if it achieves good development results and good development results are not possible if gender inequalities persist, environmental damage is accepted or human rights are abused."

Mary Robinson, at the workshop "Strengthening the Development Results and Impacts of the Paris Declaration through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights", London, March 2008

The Paris Declaration, endorsed in March 2005, establishes global, time-bound commitments for donor and partner countries to support more effective aid in a context of significant increases in official development assistance (ODA). The intention is to reform the delivery and management of aid in order to improve its effectiveness and achieve development results.

The links between aid effectiveness, development effectiveness and gender equality are numerous and strong. The Paris Declaration explicitly recognises these links in paragraph 42. Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental cornerstones for achieving development results and the ultimate goals of the Paris Declaration, namely to increase the impact of aid on reducing poverty and inequality, increase growth, build capacity and accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Moreover, gender inequalities are costly and undermine development effectiveness.

Equality between women and men is both a human right and a development goal, which can be more effectively advanced by using the principles of the Paris Declaration. Experiences from work on gender equality and women's empowerment can enhance its implementation. The principles embodied in the Declaration correspond with established approaches to work on gender equality and development. All development specialists, whatever their field, can use these synergies between the commitments of the Paris Declaration as a means of making aid and development more effective.

1. Other documents in the series on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness are Issues Brief 2 "Finding the entry points" and Issues Brief 3 "Innovative Funding for Women's Organisations". These documents should be read together.

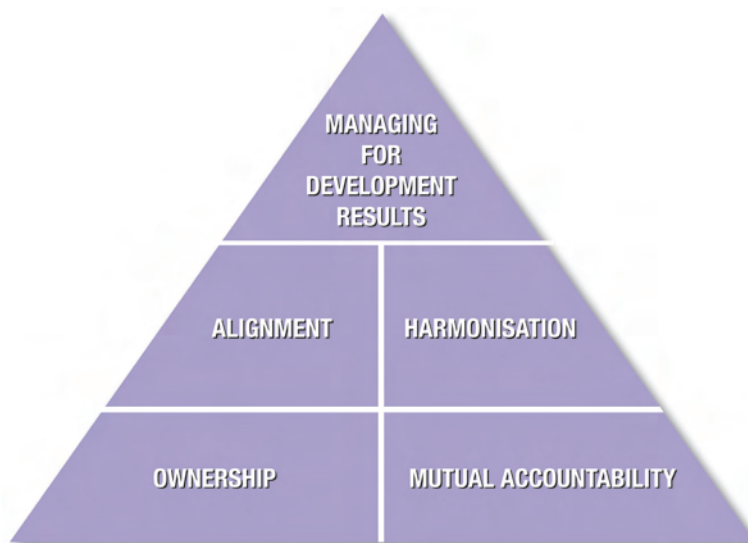
The contributions of Cathy Gaynor to this Issues Brief are gratefully acknowledged by the DAC Network on Gender Equality.

THE PARIS DECLARATION PRINCIPLES AND THEIR LINKS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Paris agenda is about giving greater weight to what partner countries want. It requires moving away from individual donors selecting and implementing their own projects towards the riskier - but higher payoff - approach of improving how things are done in partner countries. Informing this agenda are five overarching principles, each of which is based on good development practice.

The principles interact with each other rather than being played out singly. *Ownership* and *mutual accountability* are the bedrock and are closely related, as both government and citizens have a stake in their country's development policies and performance. *Alignment* and *harmonisation* are based on these and are also linked to each other, while the intended outcome for all development and aid interventions is the achievement of enduring *development results* on the ground.

Interaction between Paris Declaration principles



OWNERSHIP: PARTNER COUNTRIES TAKE THE LEAD IN SETTING THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The basis for democratic ownership is that the interests and voices of all citizens – women and men – are included in national development strategies and that everyone benefits from development results. Broad based, democratic ownership requires participation by all stakeholders, including civil society, the media, communities, service providers, parliament, line ministries and local level governance structures.

A workshop entitled “Advancing Gender Equality within a Joint Assistance Strategy” was convened by Irish Aid in Tanzania in February 2006. Parliamentarians, as well as civil society actors, spoke passionately about their marginalisation from the JAS development process and of the decisions being taken by a small cadre of government officials and donors without adequate inclusion of other stakeholders, or sufficient dissemination of information.

For most countries, development strategies encompass a poverty reduction strategy (PRS) and other medium-term national plans and sectoral programmes as well as globally agreed commitments, such as the MDGs. Attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in analysis, policy formulation, resource allocation and implementation can ensure that poverty reduction strategies and other development strategies are more operationally effective and results-driven.

Critical questions to consider on ownership, gender equality and women's empowerment include:

1. Is the national development process genuinely country-led – rather than driven by donors and/or solely the Ministry of Finance:

a) are *line ministries*, such as education, health, labour and enterprise, as well as women's ministries and decentralised levels of government, engaged in policy dialogue; are aid reforms aimed at strengthening national development strategies with a view to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment?

b) are *civil society* and *private sector representatives* (including women's organisations, business groups, parliamentarians, the media, academics and professional associations) involved in the design of national development strategies?

2. Are national development strategies based on global agreements and conventions, such as the MDGs, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)?

3. How well are the partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration – and their implications – known and understood by stakeholders such as parliamentarians, non-governmental organisations, the media and women's organisations in-country; what is being done to develop the capacity of these actors and other “drivers of change” to address aid and development effectiveness as well as gender equality and women's empowerment?

4. Are donors collectively and consistently paying adequate attention to and supporting gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries; are donors providing resources and other incentives to assist with integrating these issues into strategies and programmes, for example through feedback on how gender equality is addressed in joint PRS reviews, sectoral reviews and in joint staff advisory notes (JSAN)?²

Gender-responsive development strategy in Uganda

Experience from Uganda indicates that it can take a long time (in this case, seven years) for a gender-responsive national poverty strategy to emerge, even with a relatively strong women's movement and support from donors. This was only achieved through the sustained and co-ordinated efforts of sector ministries and civil society working together with central agencies for finance and planning, with support from donors. Line ministries, women's ministries and civil society, including women's organisations, should also be fully involved in development planning, as well as implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and have access to resources. Donors can play a supportive role in this process (for example by strengthening capacity), preferably through harmonised structures such as development-partner discussion groups.

Source: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships. Discussion Paper, UNIFEM, March 2006.

Support to the Safe Motherhood Programme in Nepal

In Nepal, the implementation of the government's national safe motherhood programme has been supported by structural changes, donor assistance and civil society involvement. Civil society has been instrumental in “capturing the voices” of the poor and excluded, and facilitating dialogue and broad-based ownership.

Ownership of and accountability for safe motherhood and neonatal health has been strengthened by women becoming more informed and organised, as well as by the increased acceptance by local government officials and health workers of the legitimacy of the approaches used.

Source: Case study presented at the workshop on “Strengthening the Development Results and Impacts of the Paris Declaration through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights”, March 2008. See www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/resultsandimpacts.

ALIGNMENT: DONORS BASE THEIR SUPPORT ON PARTNER COUNTRIES' NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, INSTITUTIONS AND PROCEDURES

This means that donors align with partner country policies and development agendas, using local administrative and financial systems. “Alignment” includes a commitment to strengthen and support the capacities and systems of developing countries, rather than creating or working with parallel structures. Both donors and development partners can make greater use of global agreements and conventions on gender equality and national gender equality policies as the basis for policy dialogues. Actions which are inconsistent with such globally agreed commitments, including the MDGs, undermine results and impacts.

In addition, public financial management (PFM) systems can be made more effective by using gender responsive budgeting practices (see box). Donors and partners can work together to jointly develop the capacity of both gender equality specialists and macro-economists involved in public financial management so that each more fully understands the other's point of view.

2. These are produced by the World Bank and IMF to assess and advise on Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Gender responsive budgeting in Morocco

The results-based budgetary reform in Morocco, which was launched to stimulate a new culture of public financial management, provided a strategic entry point for gender responsive budgeting (GRB).

The GRB initiative had two phases: an initial “sensitisation” phase (2003-05) to engage ministries and develop practical guidance and tools, followed by an “institutionalisation” phase (2005-08) grounded in the production of a gender report to accompany the Finance Bill. The Report provides an analysis of the gender equality dimensions of public policies and budgets and their impacts on the population. It is developed through a participatory process, involving a growing number of ministries and civil society organisations.

As a result, gender responsive budgeting is being integrated into the national budgetary process. The Prime Minister’s circular letter of 2007, for example, called upon line ministries to include gender responsive indicators in the performance budget indicators. Ongoing work includes developing and refining tools and extending the use of these tools to local and community levels.

Source: Case study presented at the OECD DAC workshop on “Development Effectiveness in Practice– Applying the Paris Declaration to Advancing Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability and Human Rights”, Dublin, April 2007. See www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/inpractice

Gender responsive public financial management in Ethiopia

A partnership between donors and the government in Ethiopia enabled the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment into the national development strategy, funding modalities and monitoring mechanisms.

As a result, a gender responsive budget was initiated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and gender equality was mainstreamed both in the strategic planning and management documents of the Ministry and in the national Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP).

Source: Case study presented at the workshop on “Strengthening the Development Results and Impacts of the Paris Declaration through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights”, March 2008. See www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/resultsandimpacts.

Critical questions to consider on alignment, gender equality and women’s empowerment include:

1. What is the policy base on which donors are aligning; do activities build on country analysis and include explicit gender equality strategies which, in turn, are based on international commitments and established national gender policies?
2. What is the extent of policy dialogue on gender equality and women’s empowerment; in which fora is it taking place; who is engaged and what impact does it have?
3. Is the capacity of finance and sectoral ministries being strengthened by the use of gender analysis and are the techniques of gender responsive budgeting being applied to public financial management?³
4. Within broader development reforms of the public sector, is gender equality being addressed in the changes being made to staffing, institutions and procedures?
5. Is there co-ordinated action to systematically mainstream gender equality into sector-wide approaches (SWAs) in sectors where gender equality is “traditionally” addressed, such as health and education; are “lessons learned” being transferred to sectors where gender equality has often been ignored, such as infrastructure, and to “newer” institutional areas like justice, law and order?
6. Is existing gender expertise in partner countries (or regions) used; is the country’s own capacity to implement gender equality commitments being supported?

HARMONISATION: DONORS’ ACTIONS ARE BETTER CO-ORDINATED, MORE TRANSPARENT AND COLLECTIVELY EFFECTIVE

The rationale for harmonisation is that joint donor actions and common procedures will reduce transaction costs and enhance the effectiveness of aid. The likelihood of gender equality and women’s empowerment being considered in harmonised approaches and division of labour exercises depends on how strong the commitment is from partner country governments and from donors.

Joint donor support for gender equality initiatives, together with the government and civil society, should be pursued. Gender equality working groups need on-going support from donors, and a forward looking agenda, if they are to remain active and vital.

Opportunities for joint learning and mechanisms for communicating key messages can be strengthened.

Gender equality advisors, programme managers and staff responsible for commissioning and designing studies and missions can together plan joint gender-specific and gender-inclusive analytical and review work. The development of country assistance plans and strategy papers are good opportunities for joint work.

Critical questions to bear in mind related to harmonising around gender equality and women's empowerment include:

1. In what ways does the transition from project-based approaches to more harmonised programmatic approaches affect the political and policy space for addressing gender equality and women's empowerment?
2. How are gender equality and women's empowerment dealt with by donors and how do they fare in division of labour exercises:
 - a) is it clear which donors will support gender equality and how will this be done – as a “cross cutting” issue, as a ‘sector’, or both?
 - b) is the donor(s) with the greatest comparative advantage and capacity responsible for gender equality?
 - c) how far is capacity for gender analysis taken into account when determining comparative advantage and planning how work is staffed (both donors and partners)?
3. Is there scope for developing common donor procedures and approaches to support national women's ministries and organisations?
4. How are donors supporting or participating in joint analytical work on gender equality and women's empowerment?

Division of labour on gender equality in Tanzania

The Development Partner Group on gender equality in Tanzania used a division of labour exercise to advance gender equality across the aid architecture. Individual donors agencies were appointed ‘gender contact points’ for different sectoral working groups.

Irish Aid was assigned as contact point to the agriculture sector and used this mandate to highlight gender equality as an important issue for the review of the National Agriculture Sector Development Programme. To encourage the Ministry of Agriculture, discussion was first initiated with the Ministry for Community Development, Gender and Children by the Chair of the Development Partner Group on Gender Equality (CIDA). The Gender Ministry then influenced the Ministry of Agriculture to align the review with government commitments on gender equality. Requests for technical support on gender issues in the agriculture sector were met by Irish Aid.

The division of labour exercise was also used to support capacity development on gender based violence, resulting in the establishment of a basket fund to address this issue.

Source: Case study presented at the workshop on “Strengthening the Development Results and Impacts of the Paris Declaration through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights”, March 2008. See www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/resultsandimpacts.

Harmonised gender audit in Rwanda

Eight organisations (DFID, Sida, UNDP, UNFPA, Action Aid, SNV, Trocaire and Norwegian People's Aid) have jointly undertaken a participatory gender audit of organisational systems in Rwanda. The conclusions and recommendations of the audit could be used as a tool to establish benchmarks and to assess aid effectiveness. It also provides a common platform to move forward. The initiative is a good example of donor and NGO harmonisation and has given rise to further suggestions for joint action. The process has been so popular that a new round of gender audits is planned, which will include Government agencies as well as local NGOs.

The audit has however also demonstrated the challenge faced by partners in influencing the Government of Rwanda to take forward the conclusions and recommendations of the audit and using them as a tool to establish benchmarks to assess aid effectiveness.

Source: DFID (2007), Rwanda Gender Audit Project: Synthesis of Pilot Phase. See www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/gender-synthesis.pdf.

3. See also Guide for Non-Economists to Negotiate Poverty Reduction Strategies, DAC Network on Gender Equality, April 2007.

MANAGING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: MANAGING RESOURCES AND IMPROVING DECISION MAKING TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

“Managing for development results” is critical for ensuring that attention is focused on development goals and outcomes rather than purely on the mechanics or processes of aid delivery. Reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth and building capacity are the ultimate goals of the Paris Declaration and also the basis for those working to achieve gender equality. It is therefore important to ensure that long-term results, such as gender equality, do not get squeezed out in efforts to identify tangible results as quickly as possible. There is a need to pay attention to the *quality* of results rather than solely to numerical dimensions. This means identifying who is or is not benefitting from our collective efforts. For example, although a country may be making good progress in reducing maternal mortality, is progress being made in rural and isolated areas, or only in urban areas? Gender analysis can help understand why it is harder to reach some of those under-served and to develop appropriate strategies and implementation plans.

While donors are committed to doubling ODA by 2010, there is no certainty that women and men will equally access and benefit from such increases in aid. There is scope for improvement in the collection and analysis of sound data on development outcomes and impacts. The evidence base for demonstrating the relative effectiveness and impact of different aid instruments on the lives of poor women and men remains weak. Experience from work on gender equality can contribute to such improvements. For example, expertise is available on using qualitative data and sex-disaggregated statistics to track and understand development outcomes and to address the challenges of using data to influence policy decisions.

The DAC gender equality policy marker

The gender equality policy marker identifies activities which are focused principally or significantly on achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment – implying that the activity is “intended to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment or reduce discrimination and inequalities based on sex”. Sixteen out of the 23 DAC member countries reported on the gender equality policy marker for aid disbursed in 2005-2006.⁴

Further efforts could also be made by donor agencies to apply the DAC gender equality policy marker (see box).

Critical questions to bear in mind related to managing for gender equality results include:

1. Are there national and sectoral commitments to reducing gender inequalities; who are the key players in bringing gender equality and women’s empowerment to the fore?
2. Are poor women and men benefiting from increased aid flows; how is this being monitored?
3. Are performance assessment frameworks (PAFs) transparent and do they include measurable results indicators for gender equality and women’s empowerment?

4. Do the frameworks include specific overarching objectives related to national

and international commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment, or are gender equality objectives limited to certain sectoral outcomes?

5. Is there adequate support for the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and use of gender-specific indicators in country statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems?

6. Are donors assisting with strengthening the country’s capacity to increase demand for gender-responsive results?

7. Is information about gender equality and women’s empowerment outcomes shared and disseminated in appropriate formats to help influence policies and budgets?

8. Are changes in the level of gender equality – positive and negative – monitored and used to support political and policy dialogue?

Review of the poverty reduction support credit in Vietnam

The Socio Economic Development Programme for Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas (P135) provides an example of operationalisation of the Paris Declaration and the Hanoi Core Statement on Aid Effectiveness. The P135 has supported a vast number of small infrastructure projects and trainings for community staff. This, together with a participatory and decentralised approach, has contributed to enhancing people’s participation and empowerment in commune-level government.

(box continues on next page)

4. See Aid in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment 2005-2006, OECD, February 2008.

The programme is based on national strategies and has a comprehensive system of indicators to monitor regular implementation and evaluate outcomes and impacts, disaggregated by sex, ethnic minorities and the poor. The cornerstone of P135's results based management is its implementation roadmap, which was developed in wide consultation with key stakeholders.

The P135 is a model for other programmes in Vietnam to implement the Paris Declaration and to manage budget support to strengthen government programming.

Gender mainstreaming performance measure for effective local governance in Uganda

Uganda's decentralised policy is characterised by a strong local government system supported by bottom-up electoral, planning and budgeting processes. Local governments are required to meet basic criteria to access development grants, with an incentive framework that rewards good performance and sanctions poor.

When the gender equality policy was not satisfactorily translated into action at the local levels, gender mainstreaming was included in the incentive framework. This incentive mechanism created a system and structure for collective ownership of gender equality and helped institutionalise the principle of managing for results.

Source: Both case studies above were presented at the workshop on "Strengthening the Development Results and Impacts of the Paris Declaration through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights", London, March 2008.

Making development actors accountable in Cambodia

In Cambodia, a technical working group on gender equality was set up within the framework of the Government-Donor Consultative Committee. Gender mainstreaming action groups with high-level representation were also established in all government institutions. The Technical Working Group set priorities, benchmarks, indicators and targets (linked to government-donor Joint Monitoring Indicators) and the Consultative Committee formulates action plans, oversees implementation and monitors gender mainstreaming at sector level. This initiative provides a good example of embedding gender equality within new mechanisms.

Source: Eyben, R. *et al*, (2007), "Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness Challenges and Opportunities for International Practice: Experiences from SE Asia". Report from a workshop organised by DFID, UNIFEM and the World Bank in Bangkok, 2-3 April 2007.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY: DONORS AND PARTNERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

"Accountability" is about taking responsibility for one's commitments and accounting for them. It applies to donors in their relation to partner governments and vice versa but also to governments in their relation to citizens. Experiences from work on gender equality and human rights, as well as with civil society organisations, can be usefully applied to help make a reality of the commitment.

Donor and partner countries can use jointly shared global agreements on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the MDGs, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, as the basis for both deeper policy and political dialogues and as an accountability measure to citizens.

Accountability can also be strengthened by using a common approach to supporting women's organisations and building a strong civil society. There is increasing recognition of the importance of the "challenge" role of civil society organisations. Concerns have however been expressed that aid effectiveness reforms, while increasing co-operation between governments and donors, may adversely affect donors' relations with civil society (see box).

What is happening to funding for NGOs and women's organisations under the aid effectiveness reforms?

The impacts of aid reforms on support for civil society's work on gender equality varies by region and country, as well as by organisational size and focus. Even though some women's organisations have benefited from the changed aid modalities, many have reported negative impacts.

Research findings suggest a shift away from core funding for CSOs towards short-term, activity based funding, while resources are increasingly difficult to find for long-term, risky and "intangible" work. Research also shows that there is a need to strengthen channels whereby CSOs can influence donor policy and practice.

Source: "Women's Rights & Gender Equality, the New Aid Environment and Civil Society Organisations", the Gender and Development Network (GADN) www.gadnetwork.org.uk

See also Issues Brief 3 on "Innovative Funding for Women's Organisations" by the DAC Network on Gender Equality.

Critical questions to bear in mind on mutual accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment are:

1. Are accurate and reliable sex-disaggregated data available and are gender-specific indicators used in results frameworks? If not, how can this be achieved?
2. Are civil society organisations supported to fulfil their “challenge” role?
3. Are women's organisations supported in areas where their capacity tends to be weak, such as fiscal, trade and financial policy?
4. Are decentralised levels of government accountable – and are the consultative processes at this level inclusive?
5. Are parliamentarians and other nationally accountable actors informed about the cost of persistent gender inequalities and discrimination against women? Do they know the impact that empowering women can have on achieving long-term development results?
6. In what ways and by whom is “progress” assessed; are gender analysis and gender auditing systems used?
7. How robust are donors' own internal accountability mechanisms related to gender equality and women's empowerment commitments:
 - a) what incentives are there for staff to address these issues?
 - b) what is the proportion of aid invested in gender equality and women's empowerment at country level?
 - c) In what ways are multilateral donors encouraged to address gender equality and women's empowerment?

The Southern Africa Development Co-operation (SADC) Gender Equality Protocol

An audit commissioned by the Southern Africa Development Co-operation (SADC) Gender Unit and SADC Parliamentary Forum examined the extent to which regional and international instruments for advancing gender equality had been implemented. The greatest challenge identified in the audit was to move the SADC region from an era of commitments to an era of implementation.

The main recommendation was that Heads of State adopt a Protocol to accelerate gender equality, which would entail elevating the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development into a Protocol. Since 2005, the process of drafting and lobbying for the Protocol has involved national governments, national civil society organisations, regional organisations and regional governance bodies. The Gender Alliance, a group of regional organisations, has supported lobbying and advocacy, both at national and regional levels, including through the provision of technical support.

Each country, through its gender and other relevant ministries, has reviewed, discussed and debated the various drafts of the Protocol. Civil society organisations, with support from the Gender Alliance, have been directly involved in the country-level consultations. SADC has played an instrumental role in convening and supporting the process and is the ultimate body that will approve the Protocol. This example demonstrates the use of regional mechanisms as a means of strengthening national level accountability.

Promoting accountability in the health sector in Peru

A programme by the humanitarian organisation CARE in Peru, aimed at improving the health of the poor, acknowledges that significant and sustainable improvements can only be made if the poor are involved in shaping health policies, practices and programmes, and in ensuring that what is agreed actually happens. Increasing the voice of poor women and men is at the core of this programme, which ultimately seeks to improve relations between the state and society, in order to promote fulfilment of people's right to health.

CARE linked up with the Peruvian Ministry of Health, ForoSalud (a nation-wide civil society health network) and women community leaders, to build civil society capacity to participate in decisions and advocate for health, and in particular maternal health rights. The advocacy for, and engagement in, the formulation of health rights legislation has created local mechanisms of surveillance and strengthened the basis for holding the government accountable for service delivery.

Source: Case study presented at the workshop on “Strengthening the Development Results and Impacts of the Paris Declaration through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights”, March 2008. See www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/resultsandimpacts.